

## Message Text

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73

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 IO-12 DPW-01 OMB-01 RSR-01 /121 W

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R 041100 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO / SECSTATE WASHDC 9632

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

CINCPAC

USDAO SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5618

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: GEN THUAN' S COMMENTS ON TWO- PARTY JOINT MILITARY  
COMMISSION

MEETING AND GENERAL SITUATION

SUMMARY. CHIEF OF GVN DELEGATION TO TPJMC, LTG THUAN,  
REVIEWED TWO- PARTY COMMISSION MEETING OF APR 3 WITH EMBOFF.  
SITUATION AT TONG LE CHAN ( SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS TONLE CHAM;  
GVN PREFERS TO CALL IT TONG LE CHAN) WAS ONLY ISSUE DISCUSSED AT  
COMMISSION MEETING, WITH GVN DENOUNCING ATTACKS AS CLEAR  
VIOLATIONS OF CEASEFIRE. COMMUNISTS SAID FIGHTING WAS RESULT OF  
ARVN ACTIVITY IN AREA AND PRG MERELY DEFENDING ITSELF. THUAN  
SAID HE THOUGHT PRG INTENDS TO SET UP OPENLY- ACKNOWLEDGED  
ADMINISTRATIVE AREA IN LOC NINH AREA, AND ELIMINATION OF GVN  
POST AT TONG LE CHAN IS CONSEQUENT COMMUNIST OBJECTIVE.  
THUAN EXPRESSED FEAR OF MAJOR OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES IN NEXT  
MONTH TO SIX WEEKS. END SUMMARY

1. AT MEETING WITH EMBOFF APR 4 LTG PHAM QUOC THUAN, CHIEF  
OF GVN DELEGATION TO TPJMC, REVIEWED MAIN FEATURES OF  
TPJMC MEETING OF APR 3. GVN WAS REPRESENTED BY DEPUTY CHIEF,  
BG PHAN HOA HIEP, AND PRG BY DEPUTY CHIEF, MG HOANG ANH TUAN.  
HOWEVER, THUAN SAID HE HAD UNDERSTANDING WITH PRG LTG TRAN  
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VAN TRA THAT THEIR DEPUTIES FULLY REPRESENTED THEM, AND THUAN SAID HE CONSIDERED MEETING WAS AT LEVEL OF CHIEFS OF DELEGATION. ALTHOUGH 80- MINUTE MEETING, CONCENTRATED ON SITUATION AT TONG LE CHAN,

MADE NO PROGRESS, ANOTHER TPJMC MEETING WILL BE HELD APR -#

2. THUAN SAID GEN HIEP HAD RAISED SITUATION AT TONG LE CHAN STATING THAT THIS IS MATTER OF DEEP CONCERN TO GVN. POST HAD LONG BEEN HELD BY GVN, AND ATTACKS ON IT ARE PARTICULARLY FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF CEASEFIRE. PRG IN REPLY ALLEGED THAT HOSTILITIES IN TONG LE CHAN AREA ARE CONSEQUENCE OF ALLEGED ATTACKS BY ARVN IN VICINITY OF POST, USING ARGUMENTS THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY USED TO EXCUSE COMMUNIST ATTACKS IN CUA VIET AND SA HUYNH AREAS. PRG PROPOSED MEETING BE HELD BETWEEN LOCAL COMMANDERS ON THE SPOT IN TONG LE CHAN. GVN REFUSED TO ACCEPT PROPOSAL, SINCE IT CONSIDERS THIS IS COMMUNIST EFFORT TO ESTABLISH PRINCIPLE OF DIRECT CONTACTS BETWEEN LOCAL COMMANDERS AT ALL LEVELS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY. GVN INSTEAD PROPOSED THAT GVN FULL COLONEL MEET PRG FULL COLONEL WITH LOCAL GVN AND PRG COMMANDERS STANDING BEHIND THEM. PRG DID NOT AGREE WITH PROPOSAL, AND AFTER FURTHER, INCONCLUSIVE DISCUSSION ON ABOVE LINES, MEETING ADJOURNED.

3. LTG THUAN WENT ON TO GIVE SOME OF HIS IMPRESSIONS OF MEANING OF COMMUNIST ATTACKS ON TONG LE CHAN AREA. COMMUNISTS ARE NOT TRYING TO QTE TAKE END QTE TONG LE CHAN SO MUCH AS TO MAKE LIFE SO UNENDURABLE FOR DEFENDERS THAT THEY WILL SURRENDER. PROPOSAL FOR MEETING OF LOCAL COMMANDERS IS VIEWED BY GVN AS COMMUNIST EFFORT TO PERSUADE COMMANDER ( MAJOR IN ARVN RANGERS) TO SURRENDER. THUAN SAID THAT AN LOC IS AGAIN UNDER ATTACK AND THAT ROUTE 13 SOUTH OF TOWN IS AGAIN CUT. AN LOC IS BEING SUPPLIED BY AIR, WITH DIFFICULTY, AND ITS FALL CANNOT BE EXCLUDED. PRG CLEARLY WANTS TO EXPAND TERRITORY WITHIN WHICH IT CAN ESTABLISH AN OPENLY- ACKNOWLEDGED ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER, AND AN LOC/ LOC NINH AREA SEEMS TO BE THE CHOICE.

4. THUAN SAID HE VERY MUCH DOUBTS THAT PRG LTG TRAN VAN TRA WILL RETURN TO SAIGON. EMBOFF NOTED THAT TRA HAD TOLD GEN. WOODWARD THAT HE WOULD GO ON TO PARIS AFTER CONSULTATIONS IN HANOI ( TRA FLEW UP TO HANOI ON U. S. C-130 ON MAR 31) AND SUBSEQUENTLY RETURN TO SAIGON. HOWEVER, EMBOFF ADDED WE HAVE NO DATE FOR TRA' S RETURN. THUAN SPECULATED THAT THERE WILL BE MAJOR OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES IN MONTH TO SIX WEEKS.

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5. THUAN EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF TONG LE CHAN TO SECURITY OF SAIGON. HE ADDED GVN IS RELUCTANT TO COMMIT TROOPS TO ITS RELIEF, AS THIS WOULD INVOLVE MAJOR VIOLATION OF CEASEFIRE. THUAN ASKED EMBASSY VIEWS ON SITUATION IN EVENT OF MAJOR RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES. EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT THIS WOULD INVOLVE DECISIONS TO BE MADE AT HIGHER LEVELS AND ADDED HE ASSUMED PRESIDENT THIEU HAD TAKEN UP THIS MATTER WITH PRESIDENT NIXON.

COMMENT. THUAN WAS EXPRESSING DEPTH OF CONCERN OVER TONG LE CHAN WHICH IS CLEARLY WIDESPREAD WITHIN GVN. HOWEVER, HE APPEARS TO HAVE EXAGGERATED THE SITUATION AT AN LOC. ACCORDING TO DAO SOURCES, AN LOC HAS HAD ONLY TWO LIGHT ATTACKS BY FIRE IN LAST TWO DAYS. ROUTE 13, OF COURSE, WAS NEVER FULLY CLEARED SOUTH OF AN LOC, AND AREA IS CLEARLY CONTESTED, AS SHOOTING DOWN OF U. S. ARMY CH-47 ON FEB 17 DEMONSTRATED.  
WHITEHOUSE

NOTE BY OC/ T: # AS RECEIVED, CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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